

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027772

FOLLOWING REPEAT TANANARIVE 172 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON
ADDIS ABABA NATO DAR ES SALAAM NAIROBI NEW DELHI PORT LOUIS
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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0172

E. O. 11652: GD

TAGS: MARR, MA, US, UE, IO

SUBJ: COMMENT ON MALAGASY GOVERNMENT PROTEST OVER DIEGO GARCIA
EXPANSION

REFS: A) TANANARIVE 0171; B) TANANARIVE 0154

SUMMAGY: RATHER MILD GOMR PUBLIC PROTEST (TEXT TRANSMITTAD REFTEL A)
AGAINST DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION PROJECT PROBABLY REFLECTS FELT NEED
NOT TO BE LEFT OFF NON-ALIGNED BANDWAGON THIS ISSUE ENTIRELY. NEI-
THER BRIT EMBASSY NOR WE FEEL GOMR OR PUBLIC REACTION WILL GO MUCH
BEYOND OFFICIAL STATEMENT, WHICH PROBABLY MAINLY FOR RECORD. HOW-
EVER, OFFICIAL STAND ON DIEGO GARCIA EXPANSION CERTAINLY DOES NOT
INCREASE LIKELIHOOD THAT, ONCE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT REACHED, GOMR
WILL BE PERSUADED TO REOPEN PORTS TO US NAVY, OR FOR THAT MATTER
WILL OPEN THEM TO SOVIETS.

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1. REFTEL B PARA 4, EMBASSY BELIEVES GOMR FELT IT COULD NOT KEEP

FROM PROTESTING IN VIEW LEAD TAKEN BY INDIA AND CERTAIN OTHER LITTORAL STATES. (ONE PRESS ACCOUNT MAKES SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO INDIAN INITIATIVE.) FACT NEITHER THIS NOR BRIT EMBASSY NOTIFIED PRIOR TO RELEASE IS IN KEEPING WITH GOMR MFA HABITS. WE INCLINED BELIEVE PROTEST IS ESSENTIALLY FOR RECORD, THOUGH POSSIBLE MALAGASY COUNTERPRESSURES NOT TOTALLY EXCLUDED. FOR INSTANCE, FACT GOMR HAS TAKEN SUCH STAND WILL PROBABLY MEAN IT WOULD FIND REOPENING PORTS TO US NAVY EXTREMELY DIFFICULT EVEN AFTER MIDDLE EAST CRISIS SETTLED, AS IT HAD EARLIER HINTED STRONGLY IT PROBABLY WOULD. WE DOUBT VERY STRONGLY, HOWEVER, SOVIET NAVAL UNITS WILT FIND IT ANY EASIER TO VISIT UNDER SAME SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. WHILE COMMUNIQUE IS NOT EVEN-HANDED IN DEALING WITH US AND SOVIET PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN, IT IS FAIRER THAN PROTESTS EMANATING FROM MOST LITTORAL STATES. IT SPECIFICALLY AND PUBLICLY PUTS US ACTION IN CONTEXT OF COUNTERING EXPANDING SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE. IT ALSO CALLS ON BOTH SUPERPOWERS FOR FORBEARANCE IN INDIAN OCEAN. FINALLY, IT ACKNOWLEDGES SUPERPOWER PEACE EFFORTS IN MIDDLE EAST. MEMDENHALL UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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